A Kick in the Teeth (Don't Forget That the World Sucks)
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by ShadeCrawler

Summary

It's the day of Shinsou's entrance exam so Shouta was really hoping that it would be as uncomplicated as possible. Of course, Shouta never gets what he wants.

“If I fail this exam, you should know that I blame Mido. He’s way too adorable to be allowed.”

Shouta arched his eyebrow at his nervous protégé incredulously. The two of them were waiting for Nezu outside of the training ground, one of the fake cities that Shouta used for many of the Underground lessons that Shinsou and now Midoriya attended. Shinsou was adjusting his capture scarf nervously, his hands gripping the weapon so tightly that Shouta could see his knuckles turning white. His new crossbow was attached to his wrist and a sheath of bolts was attached to his hip. He was dressed in his Yuuei gym uniform, not yet having a hero costume since he wasn’t in a heroics class. *Yet.* “How would Midoriya being ‘adorable’ be to blame for you failing this exam?”

Shinsou rolled his eyes, shifting on the balls of his feet anxiously. “He showed up this morning at the 1-C dorms with his notebooks. Charmed every single person in my class and talked his way into being allowed inside.” An impressive feat, especially considering that the General Education kids were wary of allowing heroics students in their safe spaces. Shouta didn’t blame them there. There *were* some heroics students that looked down at the kids in the General Education courses. “I walked downstairs to the common room to see Izuku being all bashful and shit and literally everyone looking at him like he was a cute baby deer.” Shinsou gestured with a slight grimace. “And he basically *is.* He’s so fucking *sweet.* It’s sickening. He showed up because he wanted to know if I wanted his help making up strategies in case I had to fight against a teacher like they had to. ”

“Did you,” Shouta asked curiously. It wouldn’t be against any rules. Students have been sharing information and possible strategies about exams since Shouta was a student, probably even before. The school liked it this way. In the field, any extra intelligence could mean the difference between success or failure. Or, the life or death of an innocent. Shouta still remembered him, Hizashi, Tensei and Oboro doing a recon mission into the teachers’ lounge in their second year to attempt to listen in on the teachers talking about their first term exam. It had failed because of course it had. Hizashi, Tensei, and Oboro all on a recon mission? Even back then, Shouta had known that it had been doomed from the start. He had gone back himself later and had actually gotten some damn information.

In a way, the recon and planning that the students did was a part of the exam as well. Were they capable of sneaking around and finding valuable information? Were they able to put that information

to good enough use?

"Are you kidding me? Of course, I did," Shinsou laughed. He grinned sharply, a bit of his nervousness thawing into what Shouta hoped was confidence. "I'm pretty sure that I have five different ways of defeating every single teacher now. I'm so glad Bone Breaker's my friend. He could probably find a way of taking down Nezu himself if he wanted to. It really wouldn't surprise me if he already had one."

"*Oh*, is that so? I'll have to test that one day!"

Shouta sighed as Shinsou whirled around, slowly turning to see Nezu smiling up at them. The principal was holding a clipboard in his hands and he was grinning up at them with a knowing gleam in his eyes. Rat had probably been listening in on their entire conversation. Shouta was a good Underground hero, had been one for twelve years now. No one could listen in on his conversations without Shouta knowing about it. *Almost* no one. After all, it was the rat in question who had actually taught him the skill in the first place. "Nezu-san," Shouta greeted tiredly, inclining his head politely at his former homeroom teacher.

Nezu grinned at Shouta, his tail swaying in what Shouta recognized as excitement. It made sense. Shouta's mentor always did like presenting his students with tests and challenges and logic puzzles. "Aizawa-kun, Shinsou-kun! A pleasant day to you both!" He smiled at Shinsou, making the anxious boy straighten up a little. "How has your morning been, Shinsou-kun," he asked with a gentleness that might've surprised anyone who hadn't been in Shinsou's exact spot before. Nezu always rooted for the underdog. Shouta knew this. He had been the underdog once, after all. "Are you nervous?"

"I-it's been good, Nezu-sensei," Shinsou said, stumbling over the greeting a little. "And, uh, yeah, a bit. But that's good, right?" He glanced at Shouta who just stared evenly back at him. "Aizawa-sensei says that only idiots aren't afraid of anything. If you're not afraid of something that's actually reasonably scary then you're either cocky or you're overlooking something important."

Nezu laughed. "That does sound like one of Aizawa's many lessons. One that I agree with. I would be surprised indeed if you weren't at least a tad nervous about what's about to happen. After all, you've been fighting for this chance ever since you arrived at Yuuei all those months ago." The rat's eyes gleamed in excitement. "Are you ready to fight for your spot, Shinsou-kun?"

Shinsou straightened up and all nervousness melted away from him, leaving determination drawn into every line of his face. He nodded sharply. “Yes, Nezu-sensei.”

No matter the results of the examination, Shouta realized suddenly with a warmth blooming in his chest, he was so proud of how his student had grown.

“Excellent! Now, I’m sure that you’ve been made aware of what the final examination for the first-year class was. You will have the same style of exam. However, unlike the other students who had a partner, you’ll be fighting alone,” Nezu chirped with a wide, sharp grin. Shouta saw Shinsou shiver from the corner of his eye. He didn’t blame him. This was a daunting task that Nezu had given him. But Shouta couldn’t find it in him to be afraid for his student. Shinsou had this. “Of course, the weights that the teacher will be wearing are heavier than the other exams, considering that you are fighting alone. Recovery Girl and the rest of the teachers are watching from an observation area which is where I and Aizawa-kun will be going once the examination starts.” Nezu tilted his head, watching Shinsou closely. “From what you said, you and Midoriya have created several plans for each teacher that you might have to face. But plans rarely survive during a mission. And even if they do, the plans only do so much. It is up to you to adapt the plan as necessary to achieve your goal.”

Shinsou took a deep breath and nodded. “What teacher am I fighting, Nezu-sensei?”

Nezu’s grin widened. “You will be fighting against–“

Shouta’s phone dinged. It was the specialized alert that all teachers had programmed into their phones that meant to alert them that, ‘*Hey, shit’s hitting the fan so look at this alert right fucking now unless you want to get covered in it!*” He cursed under his breath and dug out his phone from his pocket urgently. Nezu had tensed at the alert, knowing damn well what it meant, while Shinsou seemed confused about what was going on but obviously taking notice of the teachers’ reactions and straightening up a little. Shouta pulled up the alert, half expecting to find a notice that there was a villain attacking the dorms or that Midoriya and Iida had decided to have another race that set fire to the track (*Again*. The first time they did it, Iida hadn’t been able to look a single teacher in the eye while Midoriya looked like he wanted to die from embarrassment. It had been hysterical. It had been less hysterical the second time.) or that his kids had finally

embraced their true natures and decided to take over the world in the fucking ten minutes that Shouta wasn't holding their hands. It was much, much worse.

Life was unfair. Shouta knew this. He's known it since he was five years old when his quirk first came in and he was branded a villain in the making. He was more aware that the world wasn't fair. But every so often, the world liked to remind him of that fact, like it was worried that Shouta might forget if it didn't kick him in the teeth every so often.

Which was why he really wasn't that surprised that it was now, mere *minutes* before Shinsou's entrance exam was supposed to start, he got a notice on his phone that Yagami Enji was at the gates and requesting Midoriya's presence.

For one long moment, Shouta just stared at the notice and the picture taken of the unwelcomed kid standing outside of Yuuei's entrance. The kid was wearing a support uniform from another hero school, Seijin High School Shouta was pretty sure. The kid's head was ducked but Shouta recognized that hair from the countless video files that he had watched with Hizashi. Yagami had a bag slung over his shoulder and Shouta could see machinery poking out of it. Yagami was supposed to drop into town at some point for a support competition, Shouta suddenly remembered. It looked like he had dropped by early.

Shouta scanned the notice before letting out a deep breath. He slowly looked up at Nezu whose tail had stilled and was tense, like he was perfectly prepared to run off at a moment's notice to defend his students. Shouta understood the feeling. "Do you remember that paperwork I filed last week?"

There was a pause before a dark gleam entered Nezu's eyes. "*Ah.*"

"Yeah."

Shinsou glanced between the two teachers anxiously. "Is everything okay, sensei?"

Shouta sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose. "Well, no one's dying," he muttered. He glanced at Nezu. "I don't suppose that we could hold off starting until I go deal with this?" Because he couldn't just *ignore this.* Yagami was just standing out in front of the gates and while no one would let him in, especially not with the recent assembly that Nezu held on security and the punishments that people would receive if they allowed people onto campus who didn't have a

teacher's permission and a reason for being there, someone might ask why he was there and then go to tell Midoriya. And Midoriya could not, could *not*, be made aware that Yagami was here. Any progress that Shouta had made with the kid would immediately unravel if he saw his old bully, the one who left red spider lilies on his desk, in the place that Shouta hoped was a safe place for Midoriya.

He could send someone else to handle Yagami. But Midoriya had trusted him to deal with it. And Shouta planned on following through with that.

Nezu nodded. "Of course. Unless Shinsou-kun is fine with you stepping away to deal with our . . . *guest* while he does his exam."

Shouta turned to Shinsou, arching an eyebrow. He didn't like the idea. Not that he thought that Shinsou needed someone there to hold his hand while he did his exam. The kid was going to pass whether or not Shouta was there to root for him. But Shouta remembered his First Sports Festival. His parents hadn't been able to make it because of work and Nezu had been called away for a mission so Shouta had had no one there to cheer for him. It was just him against everyone and not one person from his corner was there to pat him on the back and tell him to keep going. Shouta ultimately hadn't needed it. He had won and gotten into the heroics course. But it would've been nice, would've been *easier* if someone was there in person. He didn't want his protégé to feel like he was less important to Shouta than a fucking bully who didn't know when to quit.

But it was up to Shinsou who gave Shouta a sharp grin and nodded. "I'm okay, Sensei." He nodded firmly and adjusting his crossbow on his arm. "Just try and get back in time to celebrate me getting into your class."

Shouta rolled his eyes and ruffled Shinsou's purple locks. "Try not and burn down the training ground, Gremlin," he drawled. "I'll try and make it back before the end of it, but we'll meet up at the 1-C dorms to move your things if I can't. Just remember your training and you'll do fine." It was unlike Shouta to give out such blatant encouragement to his students, but he was feeling especially nice today. Strange that, considering he was about to ensure a high schooler never made it within a five-mile radius of Yuuei property ever again. Maybe even threaten him with a dash of legal action if things got out of control. It all depended on how much Yagami pissed him off, he supposed. Shouta glanced over at Nezu and arched an eyebrow. "Try not to corrupt my kid while I'm gone."

Nezu grinned at him, all sharp teeth and mischievous. Fucking rat. “Oh, why must you be so suspicious of me, Aizawa-kun?”

“Because you’re you.”

“A valid argument,” Nezu laughed, throwing his head back slightly. “Go on, Aizawa-kun. You have our guest to deal with and I must start Shinsou-kun’s exam.”

Shouta nodded and marched off. The sooner he dealt with this, the sooner he could return and see his protégé kicking ass.

Shouta really wasn’t impressed with Yagami Enji.

Maybe he was being spoiled by this class, Shouta considered as he watched the boy from the shadows of the school. He had simply been watching Yagami for the last few minutes, taking in the student who had actively and repeatedly told his Problem Child to end his life, and Yagami hadn’t even seemed to notice that he was being watched. Shouta might complain about his students’ situational awareness skills but even they caught onto someone watching them after a few seconds. After half a minute at the least. Not great but better than this kid. Even if he wasn’t a hero student, Shouta wasn’t exactly hiding his presence. Yagami had his head ducked as he rummaged through his shoulder bag, one hand tapping against his hip with unusually long fingers. This was one of the many kids that had made Midoriya’s life a living hell for his entire middle school career. He hadn’t left physical scars on Midoriya like Bakugou (or at least none that Shouta had seen) but he had certainly, no doubt about it, left his mark on Midoriya.

Midoriya didn’t believe that he had worth. He believed that his life was simply worth less than everyone else’s and that if he died when protecting others then it was worth it. Shouta wondered how much of this was because of this kid and what he had said to him. All those red spider lilies left on his desk. Yagami wasn’t the only one to leave the flowers on Problem Child’s desk. He wasn’t solely responsible for Midoriya’s mental state, by any means. He wasn’t the only person to ever to be quirkest to Shouta’s student and the world itself was cruel to the quirkless. Midoriya was always going to have a difficult life full of strife and unkindness.

But how much of it had Yagami contributed to? Shouta and Hizashi had watched all of the footage given to them by Aldera and there had been twenty-three suicide baiting incidents. As far as Shouta

knew, Bakugou never participating in it. But Yagami had left flowers in all twenty-three incidents and had, just like Midoriya had said, left a bouquet there once as well. At first, it had sent Midoriya into a shaking, crying fit. Shouta had watched his student sob and cry while the other students snickered or just straight out ignored what Midoriya was going through. The twenty-third time? Midoriya had only stared at the flowers blankly while he picked them up and put them in his backpack.

After so many years of being told that he didn't matter and would be better off dead, how much of that had stuck with Midoriya?

Shouta sighed and rubbed at his eyes as he started to walk forward. He kept a bored expression on his face, letting none of the annoyance he was feeling show. This was what he was doing instead of watching Shinsou's entrance exam that he had worked towards for months. Turning away a bully from Yuuei's property before his victim saw him. He walked down the path to the entrance of Yuuei, feeling a twinge of irritation when Yagami didn't even look up. Shouta wasn't even lightening his footsteps. Goddamn it, Shouta's class *was* spoiling him. It was only when Yagami was just a few feet in front of him that Yagami noticed that someone was coming directly at him, glancing up from his bag and taking a step forward with an eager grin on his face. "Uh, hey. I'm Yagami Enji and I'm here to see-"

"You got an email, Yagami-san," Shouta said dryly, talking over him with an arched eyebrow. "I know because I sent it to you. You're not supposed to be here and you're definitely not going to be talking to Midoriya."

Yagami faltered, his smile slipping away from him. "Look, I know that, but can't I just see him for just five minutes? I sent him a letter explaining everything." He stepped forward, stopping just behind the invisible line that would set off Yuuei's security and slam the gate right in Yagami's face. "I really do wanna talk to him."

"I don't care what you want. You're not supposed to be here so I'm going to have to ask you to leave." Shouta let out a long-suffering sigh. "You just confirmed that you received the email. You know that Midoriya doesn't want to see you. You know that we won't let you onto the property and you sure as hell know that we're not about to let you in to see him. So, I don't really know what you're hoping to accomplish here." He made sure to take the time to enunciate each word and leave no room for misunderstandings. Maybe the kid would get the message and leave quickly and Shouta would be able to get

back just in time to see Shinsou kick his opponent in the face. That'd be a nice treat. "This will be your one and only warning- stay away from Yuuei grounds and especially stay away from Midoriya Izuku. clear?"

"But I just want to talk to him!" Yagami huffed and Shouta narrowed his eyes at the bitterness that flashed across Yagami's face. "It's not like I could do anything else. He's a hero student, after all. A pretty good one too, if all the talk I've heard is right." The bitterness melted into an expression that Shouta had seen on several faces over the years of being an Underground hero. It was a look that he knew that he'd see for years more in the future. It was a look of desperate greed. "I bet a lot of heroes know about him now. He's good, really good. Can't I just talk to him for a few minutes?"

After filing the paperwork for making sure that Yagami wouldn't get on the premises, Shouta had done a little bit of an investigation into Yagami Enji. Like a lot of kids before him, Yagami had wanted to be a hero. He had originally applied to Seijin as a heroics student but had failed the entrance exam, just like Shinsou. But, also like Shinsou, he had a backup plan and had gotten into the support department instead. He must've planned on impressing some teacher at his school's sports festival somehow. It wasn't unheard of. A Hero school's sports festival was the best way to get noticed and everyone knew it. It wasn't easy though. Yuuei had higher standards than most but the other Hero schools were, by no means, lax in their requirements to get into the heroics departments. Joke might be annoying at times but Shouta knew that she was a competent teacher and she would never allow a kid into her class if she didn't think that they could cut it.

Unlike Shinsou, Yagami hadn't even made it past the first round.

Suddenly, puzzle pieces were falling into place for Shouta and it came up to show a very ugly picture. Yagami only tried to get into contact with Midoriya after his showing at the Sports Festival. After he had made a name for himself, a name that *had* to be bouncing around other hero schools. Shouta had mentioned the name of his Problem Child, along with the names of a few other problematic and promising students, to a few other teachers from separate schools when they were hanging out at Joke's house for a drink on one of their few free nights – Joke was annoying, but *God* did she know how to pick the drinks she brought to share– and Shouta vaguely remembered a Seijin teacher there as well. They had arrived sometime around the third or fourth drink so Shouta didn't really remember which teacher it was.

But that teacher must've mentioned Midoriya within Yagami's earshot. And Yagami, having a personal connection with Midoriya, must've thought that he could get a shoutout from him. Shouta briefly wondered if Yagami had sent a letter to Bakugou about this before dismissing the thought. Bakugou would've exploded if he thought that someone was going to him for a handout. But Midoriya, Midoriya who was so kind and sweet and giving almost to a fault? No, Yagami must've thought that he had a chance with him.

Two very different emotions rose in Shouta at this realization. The first was anger. Who the hell did this kid think he was? Trying to take advantage of Shouta's student like that. Trying to get him to use his budding influence to get a kid into heroics. A kid who had tried and obviously hadn't made the cut. Did Yagami even realize what that could do to Midoriya's career? It was never a good look for any hero when they tried asking for favours they hadn't earned yet, especially when they were asking for things like this. *Especially* when it was a budding hero who wasn't even out of their first year. Did Yagami even consider how Midoriya would look if he had tried this? Did he care?

The other emotion was so complex that Shouta couldn't put a word to it. It was something akin to the growing anger but not quite. It roared but it also quietly hissed, '*Does this kid think that all teachers are fucking idiots?'* A shoutout from Midoriya wouldn't do shit. It didn't matter that Problem Child had so much potential in him that he was practically overflowing with it. He was a kid. A kid who didn't know or fully understand the complex requirements that all Hero schools had for their hero course students. Midoriya wouldn't have gotten anywhere and Yagami would stay exactly where he was in the support course.

Shouta almost wanted to laugh but the anger was shimmering higher than any other emotion he was feeling. After all that Yagami had done to Midoriya, he thought that he could get a favour out of him. "Leave," he said firmly. "You're not getting anything out of Midoriya."

"I don't know what you're talking about," Yagami huffed, crossing his arms angrily with a scowl. "I just want to talk to Midoriya, okay? We're old friends."

Now *that* did make Shouta laugh. The kid startled at the bark of laughter from Shouta, staring up at him with wide eyes. "Kid, do you think I'm a fucking idiot?

“I don’t-“

“Midoriya told me everything.”

Yagami’s face went white.

The kid swallowed before putting on a false grin, stretched across his face desperately. “Look, I get it. I teased him a bit growing up. It was wrong. But it was all in good fun. Midoriya gets it. Maybe we weren’t *great friends* at the end, but we’ve known each other since we were toddlers. We were all pretty close then.” Back before any of them had quirks. Back before they knew that Midoriya was *without*. “That should count for something, shouldn’t it?”

“No. I don’t think that it should. Especially when Midoriya had explicitly asked me to make *sure* that he doesn’t have to see you.”

“But-“

Shouta was done talking to this desperate idiot. He sighed and pinched the bridge of his nose. He pulled out his phone and pulled up his contacts from Seijin High school. “I’ve already asked you to leave several times,” he said firmly as he sent a text to the support teacher to come to grab their wayward student. “I *will* call the police if you don’t leave immediately.” He didn’t have to wait long. Within seconds, an answering text had arrived saying that they’d be there in five minutes. “Or we could just wait for your sensei to come grab you.” Shouta shrugged casually as Yagami’s face dropped. “Either way, you’re leaving. Midoriya won’t be seeing you and you won’t be talking to Midoriya.”

“But this is important!” Yagami clenched his fists and glared at Shouta. “He’s the last chance I have, you asshole! You don’t know me; you know shit about me! Midoriya can finally do something useful and I need this!”

Well, that was one theory confirmed. Shouta let himself feel satisfaction for a few seconds in his detective work before pinning Yagami with a stern look that he usually reserved for extremely unruly students. “What do you think that you’ll gain from this? A place in a hero course?” Yagami flushed bright red at that, further confirming the theory. “Do you really think that your teachers are so negligent that they’d let in anyone who had a first-year student speak for them? Heroics is serious business and if they think that you can’t make it then it’s nothing against you personally. It’s to make sure that a person who’d die in the field won’t ever be in that position. And by

asking Midoriya to try and help you sneak your way into the heroics course without earning it, you're putting his future career at risk. You're not seeing him and that's the end of it."

There was a long pause where Yagami just stewed, glaring at Shouta furiously with his hands clenched into fists. Shouta stared back evenly, hands stuck in his pockets and posture utterly relaxed and almost bored. Finally, Yagami whirled around and stomped away from the gate. Shouta glanced back down at his phone and sent his contact a text telling them in which direction Yagami was heading in. A little shit the kid might be but a kid all the same. Shouta's colleague sent him back an affirmation in reply and Shouta let out a frustrative sigh as he took in the time. Shinsou's exam had a time limit of thirty minutes and with the walk over and then the talk with Yagami, it had already been thirty-five minutes.

God *fucking* dammit.

The only thing that raised his spirits even a little was a picture that Hizashi had sent him of him and Hitoshi, both of them grinning like loons. Hizashi had a purple bruise on his forehead and the very last baby tooth in Hitoshi's mouth, the one that had been wiggling for months now, had been knocked out. Below the picture was a text that made Shouta's lips grow into a large grin.

[Congratulations, student stealer! You've got a new student and he even got a good kick in too. And because I'm amazing, I made sure that Nezu taped it for you. I'll order some ramen for us tonight that we can eat while you gush over each good move that your kid made. Which, I gotta say, was all of them.]

Best. Husband. *Ever*.

Problem Child was there when Shouta arrived. Because of *course* he was.

Shinsou and Midoriya were just walking out of the 1-C dorms, a small box held in both of their arms, a backpack on Shinsou's back, and a duffle bag slung over Midoriya's shoulder. Shinsou had a bright, eager grin stretched across his face and Shouta could spot redness around his eyes like there had recently been tears swimming in them. Midoriya was bouncing up and down happily at Shinsou's side, looking even more excited than even Shinsou. Midoriya was rambling at Shinsou, tripping over his words with how excited he was. Shinsou

just seemed happy to listen, watching Midoriya with the same soft look in his eyes that all of Midoriya's friends gained at one point or another when it came to Midoriya.

Shouta really couldn't blame them, not when most of the school had gained the same fondness for the Problem Child.

"And, and Urarka-chan's so excited to have someone else to spare w-with," Midoriya babbled, speaking so quickly that Shouta could just *barely* make out what he was saying. "She's so amazing and one, one of the best fighters in our class! You'll learn so much with her, I-I know that I do whenever I spar with her! And you, you should join us for dinner tonight! Shouto and I are m-making soba! You said that you, you like cold soba, right? We can make something else if you don't!"

"Nah, cold soba's good," Shinsou huffed, knocking his shoulder against Midoriya's gently. "Sounds good to me, Bone Breaker." He glanced up then and his grin got even wider when he saw Shouta make his way towards him, Midoriya's gaze moving towards him just a split second later.

Shouta felt a spark of pride grow in him at how quickly his students had noticed him. Now, *this* was the situational awareness that he had drilled into his students' heads.

"Gremlin. Problem Child," Shouta greeted, walking towards them. He grabbed the box from Shinsou's arms and placed it unceremoniously on top of the one in Midoriya's, knowing that the weight wouldn't even register to the kid. Problem Child was small but, even without his quirk, was *jacked.* He placed a hand on Shinsou's forehead and tilted it up, grinning down at his student sharply. "I heard that you kicked Yamada in the head. Nice work, kid."

Shinsou's eyes filled with tears and his grin brightened even more if that was even possible. "Just did what you taught me, sensei." He batted Shouta's hand away and dipped into a deep bow, voice turning a little wobbly. "Thank you, Aizawa-sensei. For everything. I couldn't have gotten here without you."

Shouta rolled his eyes fondly. The gesture was more to hide the burning tears in his eyes than anything else. This goddamn kid. Him and Problem Child were actually going to make him crack one of these days and make him break down into tears. "Stop talking nonsense, brat," he drawled, pulling him up from his bow and

squeezing his shoulder firmly. “You would’ve gotten here with or without me. You’re full of potential and you’re going to be a damn good hero.” He grinned at Shinsou, wide and feral and full of so much fucking pride. “Just don’t start thinking that you get to stop going to our lessons yet, kid. You still have a lot to learn. Next time, we’ll see if you can kick Yamada in the head twice next time.”

“Oi! Stop corrupting Shinsou, student stealer!”

Shouta looked up to see Hizashi walking towards them with a bright smile on his face. The purple bruise on his forehead hadn’t been healed so, considering that this was Hizashi, was probably sticking around as some sort of a badge of honour. Knowing him, Hizashi would probably be proudly pointing at it for weeks and gushing about how he got it. Shouta rolled his eyes and released his student. Midoriya was beaming at them both, tears of his own swimming in his eyes. Shinsou quickly wiped his own tears away before Hizashi could spot them. Shouta grinned sharply at Hizashi. “He’s my student now, Yamada. Which means that I can corrupt him if I want to.”

Hizashi mimed being shot, clutching at his heart with a dramatic gasp, making both boys snicker and Shouta’s grin soften with fondness. “Oh! It’s not enough that you would steal one of my students from me but now you’re actively corrupting him!” He melodramatically pouted at Shinsou. “Try not to get any bad habits from him, ‘kay Little Listener? No drinking nothing but jelly pouches, got it?”

“Got it, Yamada-sensei,” Shinsou snickered, grabbing the top box from Midoriya and shifting it in his arms. He smiled at Hizashi and bowed his head. “Thank you, sensei. For everything.”

“Aw, kiddo, you’re gonna make me *cry.”* Hizashi sniffled and ruffled Shinsou’s hair fondly. “C’mon, I’ll walk with you three to the 1-A dorms. Did you give all your goodbyes?”

Shinsou nodded. “Yep.” Shouta wasn’t surprised that it hadn’t taken very long. No one in Hizashi’s class was outwardly quirkest, as far as Shouta knew. Hizashi might not be as much as a hardass as Shouta when it came to his homeroom, but he ran a very tight ship and didn’t allow any quirkism from his homeroom students. The first incident would’ve been met with a swift lecture and correction from Hizashi. And it’d only get worse from there. But quirkism wasn’t always loud and as obvious as a broken leg, explosions against skin, or burning fingertips pressed against the back of someone’s neck.

Sometimes it was as simple as being isolated and ignored or being stared at in fear. Shouta knew that and he was sure that Shinsou did too. Thankfully, the kids in Shinsou's class weren't *too* bad. They were thankful that at least one of them was getting into heroics. “They already gave me cake and shit. I’m all ready, Yamada-sensei.”

Hizashi clapped his hands and grinned. “Perfect. Let’s get going, kiddo.”

“And get you properly introduced to the rest of the little demons,” Shouta sighed, placing a hand on both of his students’ shoulders and pushing them forward. “C’mon, brats. Let’s get going before your classmates burn the dorms down.”

As much as Shouta wished that the day could’ve ended there, Shouta never got what he wanted. Which was why, a few hours later, he was standing in the doorway of Bakugou’s former room as his former student packed the last of his things into boxes to be taken over to the 1-C dorms.

There was no conversation between the two of them as Bakugou packed. The boy hadn’t said a word since he had arrived back at Yuuei. There were dark circles under his eyes like he hadn’t slept well the night before and Shouta could see a wistful expression in Bakugou’s eyes as he looked around. Like he wasn’t sure exactly how he had gotten in this situation and hadn’t known how much he had loved this dorm room until he was being told to leave it

Finally, Bakugou spoke. “That purple-haired bastard taking this room?” He didn’t look Shouta in the eyes.

Shouta arched an eyebrow at the crass language but nodded. “Yes, he is.” Shinsou’s things were in Midoriya’s room right now, along with Shinsou himself. He had seemingly made the decision to stay scarce while Bakugou was moving out and was hiding out in Problem Child’s room. Shouta had been able to hear the two of them, Todoroki, and Iida having a lively conversation when he and Bakugou had passed it. Bakugou had clenched his jaw but said nothing.

“So, it was him then,” Bakugou muttered. He shoved a t-shirt into his backpack before zipping it up. “I figured that it had to be. He was the only Gen Ed kid that made it far in the Sports Festival at all.” He tossed the backpack over to where a box full of figurines and other knickknacks were sitting. He only had his textbooks and weights to

grab now. “Even if it was only in the top sixth-teenth. Guess that’s impressive for someone from Gen Ed.”

“It is,” Shouta confirmed, leaning against the doorframe. “It’s rare that a General Education student makes it that far.” Shouta had been the outlier in his year. In the entire General Education course, if he was being honest. There had never been a winner that had come from the General Education course before or since Shouta had made his way out onto the field. Full of fire and spite and steel in his spine. There had been kids who had made it far and those kids were usually placed in the heroics course not long after. A General Education student didn’t need to win to get noticed. Shouta hadn’t *had* to get first place to get to the heroics department.

But Shouta, for all he denied it to Hizashi, was a Drama Queen. And beating every single hero student? That had nothing but been pure drama, baby.

Bakugou worked his jaw for a minute as he stacked his weights into a box. “He doesn’t have a physical quirk,” he finally decided on. “Between the two of us, I’d win in a fight.”

“Not necessarily. I don’t have a physical quirk either. Neither does Midnight or Sir Nighteye or several other heroes that I could name off the top of my head that would beat you. There are a few third years that I could use as a reference and a second year as well. A person’s quirk status doesn’t make the hero,” Shouta said firmly.

Bakugou paused and stared at him for a few minutes, jaw clenched. Finally, he spat out, “I don’t get you. I don’t get this entire fucking thing. No other fucking teacher cared what we did with Deku. He was quirkless. *Nothing*. So why the hell do you care?” Bakugou’s words were harsh and cruel but his tone was desperate, and his eyes reflected that. Bakugou was reaching out for help, Shouta realized. Even if it was being done very badly. He wanted to know why; he didn’t understand.

Well, Shouta *was* a teacher.

Shouta stared at Bakugou for a moment as he gathered the words that he wanted to use. “. . . Your former teachers did you a great disservice. Both you *and Midoriya.* They led Midoriya to believe that he was nothing simply because of his quirk status at the time. That people could, should, and would walk all over him all his life. And they led you to believe that you could do no wrong and that

consequences didn't apply to you. That you were the best and always would be. And in doing so, they mistreated you both, albeit, in very different ways."

"But he was *quirkless*," Bakugou hissed, slamming the box of weights down in front of Shouta. "And he kept walking around with those stupid notebooks and that stupid grin and saying that he wanted to be a hero. Like it was going to be easy or some shit. He was looking down on me."

Ah. Shouta was starting to see the problem. He tilted his head. "You know, not everything Problem Child does is motivated by you." That made Bakugou flinch back a bit. "Sometimes, people just want to be heroes." Sometimes, no matter how much the world spat down on them and told them to just fucking give up already, people stood up and kept walking towards their goal. Shouta had done that. Sakura had done that. Shinsou had done that. And Midoriya had done that too. "And I think that Midoriya will be a very good one."

Bakugou grabbed his math textbook and glared down at it. "Would you still be saying that if he still was quirkless?" He huffed out a laugh. "Not that it matters. He never would've made it into Yuuei if he was."

"Quirkless people *are* allowed to apply for Yuuei," Shouta shot back. "And as for the practical exam, I think that he would've had a shot." A longshot but, well, Shouta always did like betting on those. "And even if he hadn't passed the practical portion, he would've gotten into General Education and could've gone from there."

"Yeah right."

Shouta slowly tilted his head. "You are aware that Midoriya got first on the written portion of the exam, right?" Judging by the way Bakugou's jaw clenched and his eyes widened, he was not. "Midoriya would've immediately be put into Yamada-sensei's class and he could've gone after the many ways that there are to get into the heroics course. And I think that he would've gotten in eventually too. Especially if I had taken notice of him."

Bakugou gritted his teeth and glared at him. "What, you would've trained him to get in the class? A quirkless kid?"

Shouta met his gaze evenly. "I would have, yes."

There was a pause as the two of them just stared at each other,

Shouta utterly calm and Bakugou glaring at him. Finally, Bakugou tossed his math textbook and the last few other textbooks into the last box before closing it up. Shouta grabbed the box of weights and the duffle bag, leaving Bakugou with his backpack and box of textbooks. Bakugou took one last look around, eyes distant. ". . . I just don't get it," Bakugou muttered. He didn't elaborate on what.

"That's fine," Shouta answered with a shrug. "You'll learn." He jerked his head towards the door and led Bakugou out of the room. Bakugou followed him, glaring down at the box in his arms. But, there wasn't any anger in his eyes. Just frustration and confusion.

"Bakugou?"

Ah. Great. They had been caught. And here Shouta was hoping that they could leave the dorms without being spotted.

Shouta turned to see Kirishima standing there, a confused and sad expression on his face. Bakugou didn't even look up at him. "Bakugou, man . . . I'm really sorry."

"Shut up, shitty hair," Bakugou growled, keeping his gaze firmly on the box. "I don't need your fucking pity. This is just a setback, that's all. I'll be back in the heroics course soon enough."

Kirishima nodded, rubbing the back of his neck awkwardly. "Yeah, of course. I wasn't gonna give you pity though. I was gonna ask if you wanted help moving your stuff over."

Bakugou clenched his jaw and shook his head. "No," he muttered. "I don't."

"Oh, uh, okay." Kirishima grinned at him. "Don't be a stranger though, okay? Pop in every now and then. And we can still do our weekend sparring sessions and shit! It'll be fun!"

Privately, as Shouta watched the scene play out in front of him, he wondered if Kirishima would be making these offers if he knew what Bakugou had done.

Judging by the expression that had just crossed Bakugou's face, he was wondering that too.

"You don't want to do that," Bakugou finally said gruffly. "At least, you wouldn't if you knew what this was about."

Kirishima stepped forward with an open, encouraging expression. “You could talk to me about it, if you want, bro. I’m not gonna force you but, whatever it is, it can’t be enough to make me hate you.”

Bakugou huffed and shook his head, walking down the hallway and away from Kirishima. “You don’t know that. Just piss off and focus on kicking ass in training, Shitty Hair. You’ll need it for when I get back in heroics.”

Shouta sighed and walked after Bakugou, leaving Kirishima behind them. He glanced at Bakugou, but the boy seemed lost in thought and not at all in the mood to talk. Shouta stayed silent, walking behind Bakugou as they made their way down the stairs and into the commons.

And, of *fucking* course, Problem Child was there.

Shouta inwardly cursed his luck. Midoriya had his back to them, rummaging through the fridge, rambling the entire time, with Todoroki standing at his side with a soft expression on his face as he listened to every word that Midoriya was saying. They must’ve come down for sodas or something like that. Bakugou froze when he saw Midoriya, emotions flickering across his face so quickly that Shouta could barely track them. Anger, sadness, vulnerability, and so many more that Shouta couldn’t pin down. Todoroki’s eyes snapped to Bakugou and he shifted protectively in front of Midoriya. Shouta nudged his arm silently and jerked his head to the door.

And, just as Bakugou took the first step, Midoriya turned around with four sodas held in his arms and his and Bakugou’s eyes locked.

The two boys froze as they stared at each other. The temperature in the commons dropped a few degrees as Todoroki tensed, ready to move and defend at a moment’s notice. Midoriya had an expression of helplessness, regret but also extreme relief on his face. Neither of them said a word but something seemed to pass by them after a moment and Bakugou just gritted his teeth before turning on his heel and stomping to the doors. Shouta let out a breath that he hadn’t realized he had been holding before following after him. He paused, remembering the talk that he had wanted to have with Midoriya, and called, “Midoriya, meet me at my office in an hour,” before following after Bakugou.

Shouta followed Bakugou down the path towards the 1-C dorms,

keeping silent as he followed the fuming Bakugou. It had gone better than he had hoped. No explosions, no loud screaming, no fighting. It could've gone worse.

The 1-C dorms loomed closer and Hizashi was waiting for them both in front of it. He grinned at them when they got closer, running up to meet them. "Hey! You're late." He grabbed the box from Shouta's arms with a bright grin, smiling down at Bakugou who glared right back. "I'll show you to your room, Little Listener, and then we'll do a class meeting to introduce you to everyone. Is this everything?"

Shouta rolled his eyes and plopped the duffle bag on top of the box. "Yes. We cleared the room before coming over here. Shinsou will report any other items to me if he finds any and I'll bring them over. But I don't think that there will be." He glanced down at Bakugou and nodded towards Hizashi. "Listen to Yamada-sensei." He didn't say it but Hizashi was Bakugou's last possible chance for getting back into the heroics course. If Hizashi wasn't impressed by Bakugou's improvement then he'd be staying right in General Education. "Do what he says and stay in your lane. Got it, kid?"

Bakugou's jaw clenched but he nodded. "Got it."

"Good." Shouta nodded at Hizashi. "I'll see you later, Yamada. Remember, we have that engagement later on tonight." He couldn't *wait* to eat that ramen from their favourite place while watching Shinsou kick his husband's ass. "Don't be late."

Hizashi waved a hand dismissively. "Yeah, yeah, I'll be there, and I'll pick up the supplies."

Excellent. Hopefully, Hizashi would remember Shouta's order of Tonkotsu this time. "Good." He nodded to Bakugou once more, taking in the kid's angry but lost expression, before turning and walking down the path back to the 1-A dorms. Hizashi would take care of Bakugou from this point out. There wasn't anything that Shouta could say to Bakugou that he didn't already know and wouldn't hurt. It was up to Bakugou now to make the next move.

They'd just all have to wait and see what it was.

"Thank you for coming to see me, Midoriya," Shouta hummed, ushering Midoriya into his office.

Midoriya smiled at him, a tad nervously, as he stepped inside and immediately walked for the couch. “I’m not in trouble, am I, sensei? I don’t think I did anything wrong.” He sat down with a small smile, looking much different than the kid who had walked into this office nearly a weak ago.

Shouta snorted and sat down in the loveseat with a wide yawn. God, he was exhausted. It had been a long day. “You’re fine, kid. If you’ve done anything then it wasn’t important enough for anyone to bother me with it.” He studied Midoriya through half-lidded eyes, resting his chin on his fist. “I wanted to talk to you about One for All a bit. Do you remember the last time we talked about it and I said that I had some suggestions for you?”

“Yes, I remember, sensei,” Midoriya said with a nod, clasping his hands together. “You said that I’d be starting quirk counselling soon, right?” He chewed on his lip anxiously. “Wouldn’t I have to tell the counsellor about One for All? I don’t know if I’d be comfortable with telling someone that I don’t know.”

“Relax, Problem Child,” Shouta said, softening his voice a little. “You don’t have to tell them about how you got the quirk. All they need to know is when you got the quirk, what we know about it so far, and any developments that might occur. I’ll be there for the first meeting to make sure that things are going well, okay?” He inwardly sighed in relief when Midoriya relaxed and nodded. “There are a few other things that I’d like to talk to you about. For one, therapy.”

Midoriya blinked in surprise, tilting his head. “Therapy?”

“Yes, Problem Child, therapy.” Shouta watched Midoriya carefully, for any signs of discomfort. Midoriya just looked confused. Shouta could work with confusion. “You have a lot of pressure on you because of this quirk and the legacy that comes with it. And that’s not mentioning what happened before Yuuei. I’d like for you to have someone to talk to about it. Someone *qualified*, not just me or Todoroki. Hound Dog is a licensed therapist and someone that can be trusted to keep secrets. You’ve talked to him before, yes?”

Midoriya slowly nodded. “Yes, sensei. After the USJ incident and the training camp for the mandatory therapy sessions that you have us do.” Ah, right, Shouta had made his kids do those. “I’m not opposed to going to him, sensei. He’s nice and helped me with some nightmares that I had after the USJ.”

“I’m glad that he could help you there,” Shouta said with a nod. “I think that he can help you with this too. But he has to know what he’s dealing with if he’s going to be able to. I’m not going to force you to do this,” he said gently. “As I said before, this is your secret to tell and I won’t tell it without your consent. Understand, Problem Child?”

There was a small pause before Midoriya nodded firmly. He seemed anxious but determined. “Okay, sensei. Do I need to be the one to tell him about it, or do you want to?”

Shouta arched an eyebrow. “Up to you, kid. Do you *want* me to tell him?” He nodded when Midoriya quickly nodded. “Okay then. I’ll tell him about it. There is one more person that I wanted to talk to you about telling. Yamada-sensei.” He snorted at Midoriya’s look of surprise. “I know that he acts like an idiot but he’s actually pretty smart, especially when it comes to overpowered quirks.”

Midoriya’s eyes lit up. “Because of his own quirk. It’s literally his voice and that means that whenever he speaks, he’s technically using his quirk. He must have amazing control over it.”

“He would’ve deafened everyone in Japan years ago if he didn’t,” Shouta muttered in amusement. “He works primarily with late bloomers and kids with overpowered quirks. He’s good at it too. And, I happen to know that Yamada is the best at keeping secrets.” The fact that their marriage was still a secret to most was a testament to that fact. “He’s a loudmouth but you’d be surprised about how intentional that is.”

Midoriya cupped his chin and lowered his voice into a mutter. “That makes sense if he’s intentionally doing it. It makes people think that they have him all figured out and that he doesn’t have anything to hide. He lets little, unimportant information slip to make people think that he’s loose-lipped and no one would ever tell him anything important but keeps the important information close to his chest, like your marriage or other things like that.”

Shouta nodded but then froze.

. . . What?

“Wait, back up a bit, Problem Child,” Shouta said firmly, holding up a hand. Midoriya paused and looked up in surprise. “What do you mean, our marriage?”

“He keeps it a secret,” Midoriya said slowly, tilting his head.

Shouta opened his mouth, sighed, and then shook his head. “No, why do you believe that we’re married.”

Midoriya held up his ring finger with a shrug. “Yamada-sensei has a stain around his finger where a ring is supposed to sit. I think that he probably takes it off when he’s at school. I saw it once when he was walking to the teachers’ dorms. And you have the same ring around your neck on a chain.” Midoriya shrugged. “Plus, me and Yaoyorozu-chan saw the two of you kiss when the two of us were passing by the library.”

. . . *Right,* Shouta remembered that now. It had been right before the training camp and it had been long enough after hours that they had assumed that no kids were around. Yaoyorozu and Midoriya must’ve been doing their study group thing when they found the two of them in a private moment and quickly fled before either teacher could see them. They usually did stay the longest. Well, they were the most likely to keep this secret. “I trust that you understand why this is a secret that *must* be kept,” Shouta asked firmly. “Since you’ve both kept it this long.”

Midoriya quickly nodded. “Yes, sensei, we understand. Neither of us had said anything to anyone, I promise.”

“Good. I’ll speak with Yaoyorozu about this later. Back to One for All,” Shouta huffed. Hizashi was going to find this hilarious. “I know that Yamada would never tell this secret, especially if he knows that it would put you in danger if he did. Trust me, Problem Child, he’s a loudmouth but he knows when to keep it shut when it’s important. He doesn’t necessarily *need* to know to help you, but it would help.”

There was a pause where Midoriya chewed on his cheek as he thought. Shouta stayed silent, letting the kid work through his thoughts in his own time. He was patient. Midoriya would speak when he was ready. And he finally did. “Okay, sensei. I trust you and if you trust him and Ryo-sensei then I don’t mind them knowing. Especially if they can help.” He ducked his head. “I don’t know if All Might will like it though.”

Shouta smirked. “You let me deal with All Might.” Yagi was returning to Japan tomorrow and Shouta had already told the other teachers that he would be going to pick Yagi up after classes. It would be a busy Monday. Coffee with Sakura and then chewing out All Might. Fun. “You’ve done nothing wrong. Telling people things that

you can't handle alone, especially when they can help, is never a bad thing. You've been very brave by telling me this and allowing me to take the necessary steps to help."

Midoriya blushed bright red at that and ducked his head. "T-thank you, sensei." He glanced up shyly. "Can you tell Yamada-sensei? If that's okay?"

"More than okay, Problem Child," Shouta assured him. It was probably best that Shouta told his husband this anyway. Hizashi was going to have a *lot* of opinions on how All Might had handled things and none of them were going to be suitable for children's ears. "I'll speak to him tonight about it. Now, is there anything you'd like to talk to me about or are you good?"

"I-I don't think so," Midoriya said with a shrug. He hummed and tilted his head back. "I'm feeling really good, sensei. I know that a lot of things have happened lately, and I feel bad about Kachan being put in General Education. But . . . I'm also relieved, you know. He's really not as bad as he used to be but," he shrugged and didn't meet Shouta's eyes, "I'm glad that I don't have to wait anymore if that makes sense."

It actually did make sense. Shouta knew what it was like to be in an environment with someone who had hurt you before. Even after a long period of not being hurt, even if the person was outright ignoring you, you were always waiting for when that ignoring period would end, and the harm would start up all over again. Shouta knew *exactly* what Midoriya meant by that.

"I know what you mean, Midoriya," Shouta sighed. He reached forward and squeezed his shoulder. "You don't need to wait anymore. Nothing is going to happen again, that I can promise you." He grinned at Midoriya's small smile and squeezed once more before pulling away. "Okay. If that's all then head back to the dorms," Shouta said, standing up and nodding to the door. "Try not to corrupt Shinsou too much."

Midoriya's eyes glittered with mischief as he stood up. "But, sensei, I thought that since he was in the heroics department now that he was free to corrupt." He giggled and ducked his head as Shouta ruffled his hair.

"Brat," Shouta huffed fondly. "Get going or I'll assume that you're bored and want to train."

Midoriya gasped and his eyes lit up. "Can we?"

Goddammit, this *kid.*

"Mother*fucker.*"

Shouta nodded angrily as his fingers deftly braided Hizashi's long hair. The two of them were sitting down on their old stained couch and Shouta had just gotten through telling his husband everything that Midoriya had told him about One for All and All Might. And, predictably, Hizashi had reacted with swearing and anger. It was nice to know that Shouta wasn't the only one who was pissed off about all of this. "Right? And that's just what Problem Child *told* me about all of this." He huffed and tied Hizashi's hair off with one of his hairbands. "He didn't tell me everything about this, I can tell. He's holding back about something. What, I don't know, but there's something."

Hizashi scowled and turned around so he was facing Shouta, making a gesture for the man to turn around so Hizashi could braid his hair. "What the hell could be *worse* about this situation?"

"He didn't tell me about how he met All Might," Shouta huffed, turning around and crossing his arms. He sighed at the feeling of a brush making its way gently through his hair. For all of Hizashi's anger, he brushed out Shouta's hair as gently as he always did. "Didn't tell me how exactly he was trained to take on this quirk and how long he was trained for. And those are all things that I'm going to find out, I promise you that." If not from Midoriya then from All Might the next day.

"Well, *fuck.* No wonder you wanted to wait to talk to Midoriya before telling me all of this." Hizashi sighed, making Shouta shiver from the cold breath on the back of his neck. "This is just . . . yeah. No wonder the kid's a nervous wreck at the best of times. He has the weight of the literal world on his shoulders." Hizashi's breath hitched. "Wait, that monster at Kamino? Midoriya was supposed to fight against *him?"*

Shouta gritted his teeth and nodded shortly. He didn't even know how to put into words just how furious he was about the connection between Midoriya, All for One, and All Might. Yagi had mentioned that he had thought that All for One had been dead for years at one point and that better had been true. Otherwise, Yagi was getting dangerously close to grooming a child, a fucking *kid,* for a suicide mission.

Oh. Oh, fuck. Shouta just thought of something.

Hizashi must've noticed Shouta's sudden, terrifying realization because he stopped braiding his hair. His voice was full of concern when he asked, "Kitten? What's wrong?"

Shouta had to force himself not to clench his jaw hard enough to break it. But he could feel the furious anger simmering under the surface. "Hosu. There had been Nomus there that night and one of them had grabbed Midoriya and tried to fly away with him. How much do you wanna bet it was because All for One had seen Midoriya at the Sports Festival and made the connection on who exactly Midoriya was." He nodded when, after a short silence, Hizashi let out a stream of curses. "*Exactly.* Goddammit, if Stain hadn't stopped the Nomu then who *knows* what would've happened to Midoriya."

Neither said it but both of them were thinking the same thing. Midoriya probably would've been killed. Or warped and twisted in ways that would've destroyed the boy that they knew.

Fucking hell, if Shouta had known then he never would've allowed Midoriya to compete. There were other ways that the kid could prove himself. If it meant keeping him safe and his identity a secret then Shouta would've kept Midoriya right by his side in the commentators' booth, even if the kid would've hated him for it. His identity would be safe, and he'd be alive to hate Shouta for it.

"I think," Hizashi hummed as he grabbed a white ribbon that he kept around solely because he liked seeing Shouta's hair tied back with it, "that I'm going to punch All Might in the face. Nezu too if he knew about this."

"Nezu knows. And he apologized already and plans on apologizing to Midoriya." Shouta sighed. "Not that it makes any of this any better. All for One is locked away but the man has allies. He has to after so many years of being alive." He leaned back and closed his eyes at the feeling of fingers gently braiding his hair. Shouta had sensitive hair and it usually gave him headaches if his hair was tied back too tightly. Hizashi knew how to braid it in a way that never hurt Shouta's head. "I didn't let the kid know this but I'm honestly terrified to have the kid leave the campus. He's a target and so is everyone else in my class for being close to him. But I can't exactly keep them cooped up in here. The kids are going to hate me for this but I'm going to have to force a buddy system on them."

“They’ll be *alive* to hate you for it,” Hizashi shot back. “That’s all that matters. Midoriya agreed to lessons with me, right? Then we should get those started soon. If there’s ever a reason to get to know about this quirk then there it is.”

Shouta nodded firmly and then flinched as Hizashi’s fingers brushed over the back of his neck at the movement. “Shit.”

“Sorry,” Hizashi hissed, leaning forward and kissing the back of his head. “That was an accident, Love.”

“You’re fine,” Shouta sighed, pushing away the feeling of burning fingers pressed against his neck. Hizashi would be able to see the perfect fingerprints burnt into his skin from where he was sitting. “But you’re right. Lessons with you can start on Tuesday, after I talk with All Might tomorrow and see if he knows anything about this quirk. The sooner that we get into this, the better.”

The ribbon wrapped around the end of Shouta’s hair and then Hizashi was kissing his temple with a firm smack. “Good,” Hizashi said with a nod. Shouta turned around enough to see Hizashi’s expression. It was hard and resolute and made Shouta think of the one screaming voice that never made Shouta feel afraid but safe instead. “No wonder you’ve been so stressed out, Shou. I’m feeling stress lines appear and I’ve only known about this for, like, five minutes.”

“We’re going to be old and grey by the time we’re thirty-three and it’ll be all Problem Child’s fault,” Shouta sighed, leaning against Hizashi who wrapped his arms around him.

Hizashi snorted and nodded. “Yep. Hey, there are upsides to all of this.” He nodded at the containers full of ramen waiting for them on the coffee table. “We have ramen now, at least. And Midoriya’s safe in the dorms now along with the rest of the other kids so we know that we can eat our dinner in peace for tonight, at least. We can figure out the rest tomorrow. You know, after you’ve interrogated Yagi-san.”

Shouta rolled his eyes and grabbed his container full of Tonkotsu. Hizashi wasn’t *wrong* after all. He *was* planning on interrogating Yagi and then ripping into him for hiding all of this. “Put on Shinsou kicking your ass,” he demanded in a mutter. “I need something to pick me up. Especially after having to deal with Yagami Enji today.”

Hizashi got up off the couch but arched his eyebrow at Shouta

as he walked to the TV. “So, that’s what you were doing.”

“Kid thought that he could get into his school’s heroics department if Midoriya put in a good word for him.”

Hizashi let out a low whistle. “Holy shit.”

Shouta huffed and angrily started slurping his noodles with a nod.

“Well, he’s gone now. And Midoriya didn’t see him so it’s . . . not *fine* but terrible either.” Hizashi glanced back at him and smiled. “We’ll figure all of this out, Kitten. Trust me. Let’s just focus on watching Shinsou kicking me in the face for now, yeah?”

Shouta sighed and nodded, relaxing against the couch. He’d think on all of this later on, when he’s had time to properly calm down from it all. For now, he’s eat his ramen, cuddle with his husband, and watch his protégé kick some ass. A good end to a very complicated day.

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